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RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 0073
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 0035
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 0009
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 0022
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RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000377

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SUBJECT: TURKEY PRIORITIZES PAKISTAN STABILITY; COURTS INDIA

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Classified By: Political Counselor Janice G. Weiner, reasons 1.4 b, d

11. (C) SUMMARY. Turkey favors a grand governing coalition in Pakistan, to continue to include President Musharraf, MFA South Asia DDG Hizlan told us February 26. Rather than internal politicking, Pakistan's politicians should be focused on curtailing violence and extremism. Turkey is not directly engaged in lobbying Pakistan's political leaders, but is prepared to send FM Babacan to Islamabad after a new government is formed. Turkey also believes it will have the opportunity to play a constructive role April 9, when it expects Presidents Karzai and Musharraf to come to Turkey for another trilateral summit. Karzai has confirmed his participation; Turkey is still awaiting confirmation from the Pakistani side. The Turks have rediscovered India. FM Babacan's five day visit -- Turkey's first FM visit to India in thirty years -- has set the stage for ramping up bilateral political, military and economic relations, to be further bolstered by a PM Erdogan visit to New Delhi, probably by the end of the year. END SUMMARY.

TURKS WANT STABILITY IN PAKISTAN,
CONTINUE TO SUPPORT MUSHARRAF

12. (C) Turkey continues to support Musharraf and would like to see him remain as president in a grand governing coalition in Pakistan, MFA South Asia DDG Hizlan told us, February 26. The Turks are unsure whether this will be possible or not. Hizlan was optimistic that PPP leader Zadari has not openly opposed Musharraf's remaining as president, and that Sharif, for the time being, seems to have left the decision to the courts, when they are re-constituted. Hizlan described as positive the proposed nomination of PPP deputy leader Fahim as PM, noting that he is acceptable to Musharraf and known to the Turkish Ambassador as easy-going. He speculated that Sharif might be biding time for defectors from Musharraf's PML-Q to join his ranks, potentially giving his party a claim to the top job. Echoing the clear message President Gul delivered in December, Hizlan said Pakistani politicians must put aside partisan politics and focus on stability by taking measures to curb violence and extremism, and ensure the economic gains of the last few years do not evaporate.

13. (C) Hizlan noted political director-level discussions MFA Deputy U/S for Middle East and South Asia Sinirlioglu recently held in London in which he recalled Turkey's similar experience transitioning from direct military rule to democracy, in the early 1980s. Turkish civilian politicians chose to participate in elections and serve in government under the presidency of General Evren, even after the party supporting Evren was trounced in parliamentary elections. This allowed for a smooth eventual transition to civilian rule.

14. (C) The GOT has not directly lobbied political leaders in Pakistan, according to Hizlan. Telephone diplomacy doesn't work there, he said. However, FM Babacan is prepared to visit Pakistan after a new government is formed. The GOT also believes it will have an opportunity to contribute to stability in Pakistan and the region when Presidents Karzai and Musharraf return to Turkey for another trilateral summit.

Karzai has confirmed his participation for April 9, but Turkey is still awaiting confirmation from the Pakistani side. Noting that Turkey was represented at the last summit by then-President Sezer and PM Erdogan, Hizlan said the summit could help strengthen the new government's cooperation with Musharraf if Musharraf and the new Pakistani PM attend together. Pakistani policy might, however, preclude the two leaders from traveling outside the country at the same time.

REDISCOVERING INDIA

15. (C) Hizlan told us Babacan was very satisfied with his February 5-9 visit to India, terming it a "rediscovery." It was the first Turkish FM visit in thirty years. The two sides focused on enhancing trade and energy cooperation. Indian Oil Corporation is already participating in a number of pipeline and refinery projects in Turkey. Hizlan

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described as feasible a multi-pipeline project to connect Mediterranean-Red Sea energy pipelines to Turkey through an oft-discussed pipeline connecting Israel to Samsun-Ceyhan. He said such a bypass could provide India more affordable access to international energy resources, and the Israelis are also interested. There was discussion about bringing the three countries' energy ministers together. Turkey is interested in pursuing more construction contracts in India, and Hizlan said State Minister for Trade Tuzmen will already begin following up on these talks by traveling to India with a delegation of Turkish construction firms in mid-March.

16. (C) Politically and militarily, the Turks are also keen to keep up the momentum. The Indians will host MFA U/S Apakan for bilateral consults in May, while the Indian Air Force commander is expected to visit Ankara in March and the Turkish Land Forces Commander to visit India in April. PM Erdogan is preparing to visit India in late 2008. Hizlan also informed us that Turkey has concluded legal procedures with the GOI to open a Consulate General in Mumbai, and is now seeking space. It is also planning new consulates in Hyderabad and Chennai.

17. (C) Turkey's and India's respective policies on Kashmir and Cyprus have slowly become "less entrenched," according to Hizlan. The two issues, he said, were not discussed during Babacan's visit. Pakistan only came up in the context of regional stability. Turkey knows India can be adversely impacted by events in Pakistan and appreciates the patience and calm India has demonstrated so far. FM Babacan told a visiting CODEL Biden, February 15, that he and his Indian counterpart had agreed to remain in close contact on the situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

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